



## *The Betty Letters*

*My Dear Grandchild,*

*I must tell you of the latest thing that I have done: Grandpa is taking Russian-language lessons. After cajoling him for months, he has submitted to my will – as all husbands should, of course, when confronting by an overwhelming force. My thinking is, simply, that Russian is the language of the future, after Mandarin, of course. Anyway, the new President of The Russian Federation, Mr Something-Or-Other Putin, is rather good looking, don't you think? English will, I suppose, always be of some importance in the world, but the future will see the emergence of the Chinese language and the Russian language as the two, most-important languages of the world. I have engaged the services of a very nice young man to teach Grandpa the rudiments of the Russian language, every other day. The nice young man is a teacher of Russian at The Chinese University of Hongkong and he agreed to teach Grandpa for a very reasonable annual honorarium. Actually, he should be very honoured to have been chosen by me, in the first place, to enter into this commission. After all, I could have obtained the services of a Russian man or girl from Macau. The reason that I chose this young man over the other candidates was that I have been told that some of those Russian men, living in Hongkong and Macau, are known to be pimps or crooks, while nearly all of the Russian girls are not, exactly, right out of the top drawer. It would not be correct to have such people near Grandpa: He might start talking about other things, instead of concentrating on the task, at hand. So, there is Grandpa, now, going back to school, so to speak. At first, he fought me, but, after some tears (from me) and, when that did not work, I yelled and yelled and yelled, he gave up and agreed to my reasonable requests. He seems to be settling in to the new routine of learning – which is, really, very new to him because he has not learned very much for some years, you know. He has become so used to taking orders from Beijing that he has forgotten what it is like to make one's own decisions. Poor dear! That is what happens when a man reaches a certain age and stage, I suppose. I told him that one has to exercise the frontal lobe, occasionally, otherwise, as the saying goes: If you don't use it, you lose it. That is what happens with that other important, male appendage when it is not used for an extended period of time. You know, something, when I told him, Grandpa did not know what was the frontal lobe of his brain, the little that he has left, I mean. I was shocked at his ignorance. But he does not seem to mind being ignorant. Men! In the words of Thomas Gray: 'Where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise.'*

*I see that the Hongkong Government is preparing to stop subsidising the English Schools Foundation (ESF) in order to save some more money. Quite right! What do we want with the English and the English language, any way? Actually, that was my idea, you know. What a waste of taxpayers' money! This is the People's Republic of China, now, not an imperialist colony of Great Britain. The ESF subsidy should have been stopped as soon as we were shot of the British, in any event. Out with the old, in with the new, I always say. The standard of English in Hongkong is deteriorating, to be sure, but who cares? Within the next fifty years to one hundred years, Chinese and Russian will be the languages of international commerce. People who do business with us will have to learn to speak and write in either Chinese or Russian in the fullness of time. China has 1.30 billion people – and they, all, speak Chinese. England only has about sixty million people – and most of them are unwashed, drunk on warm beer, with most of them, being bald. We Chinese, on the other hand, bathe daily, never drink warm beer,*

*and our men's hair is, always, jet black and full. Have you ever seen a bald or white-headed Chinese senior official? I have been told by my friend, Mary, that many of the English, Scottish and Welsh homes, outside of major cities, still do not have indoor plumbing. The residents of these houses have to go in the garden shed – which is known as an outhouse – to do what comes naturally. I suppose that, one of the main reasons that the Governor's Mansion of Hongkong, always, had such a beautiful show of hibiscus in its gardens was because its inhabitants, who were, always, British until Grandpa took over, had a plentiful supply of fertilizer or 'night soil' as the British call it. The British are known to be big eaters of meat and swill down copious quantities of claret with their meat. That is called blood and bone when it is excreted out of an Englishman's nether orifice, you know. The time has come (and, perhaps, it is overdue) for Hongkong to forget its past and live for the future. We lead the way for our people, all seven million of them. I think that I am warming to this job, now. If Mrs Hillary Clinton can be a Senator of the US in spite of her cavorting husband, former US President Bill Clinton, having managed to avoid prosecution for uttering falsehoods under oath, when he was not having it off with little girls in his employ, there is no reason that I cannot rise to much greater heights. I am much better looking than Senator Hillary Clinton and my political position is much more secure than her position ever was or ever will be. Grandpa would never start smoking cigars and, even if he did, he would not be putting them in apprentice ladies orifices, front or back. I think that I might be justified in cutting off his you-know-what if he tried that stunt. Talking about you-know-what, I have to go now because my lord and master has just finished his shower. Talk to you later.*

*Chief Lady of Hongkong*

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